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31 January 1963

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT: Secretary of Defense's Testimony Before House  
Armed Services on 30 January 1963**

1. A few items in the testimony of Secretary McNamara are noteworthy.

2. For the first three hours the briefing session was devoted solely to the Cuban situation, both the crisis aspects and the remaining military strength. This picture was presented by [ ] DIA, utilizing slides and pictures in an extremely effective manner by showing what had been moved into Cuba and then demonstrating what we know to have moved out with the difference being current military strength in Cuba. Thus, these two major problems were rolled into one, and Mr. Vinson appeared to state the consensus that they felt this was one of the finest presentations the Committee had ever had.

3. General Taylor clearly sounded the warning of the remaining problem in Cuba by posing the rhetorical question, "Why do the Soviets still remain there with the various weapons systems?" In response to queries of what would happen if the Soviets chose to activate their SAM sites in the sense of taking action against U-2 flights, McNamara stated this was highly classified but then relented sufficiently to state that the matter would be dealt with, and the implications were completely clear to the Committee.

4. Representative Osmons delivered a violent attack against the intelligence community, stating in effect that the Cuban situation was the worst intelligence failure since Pearl Harbor. He indicated three possible explanations: a. criminal

conspiracy on the part of the intelligence community to withhold information, b. massive withholding of information by the Executive Branch, or c. gross incompetence on the part of the intelligence community. Mr. McNamara responded, indicating considerable more detail could be furnished to a smaller group. He also pointed out that hundred of people had died in fulfilling the responsibility which Osmer's had charged was not being fulfilled. McNamara further stated that he fully disagreed with Osmer's and felt that Osmer's was doing a disservice to the country by damning this situation without knowing the full story. Mr. Vinson also put the finger on Osmer's by saying he wanted the record to note that Osmer's was a member of the Subcommittee for Intelligence and, therefore, had a responsibility to recommend a remedy if he thought intelligence was not adequate. He requested Osmer's to state his recommendations at that time. Osmer's did not have any answer for this.

3. In the afternoon session Mr. McNamara began his statement and gave the highlights of the Soviet missile strength, pointing out that he was speaking from National Intelligence Estimates and giving the Army and Air Force dissents. He also pointed out the specific assumptions on which Defense planning was predicated, utilizing as a base point the NIE.

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